

K. C. M. B.

SHORT SKETCH
OF THE
EVIDENCE
Delivered before a Committee of the House of Commons
FOR THE
ABOLITION
OF THE
SLAVE-TRADE:
TO WHICH IS ADDED,
A
RECOMMENDATION OF THE SUBJECT
TO THE
SERIOUS ATTENTION OF PEOPLE IN GENERAL.

"Canst thou, and honour'd with a Christian name,
Buy what is woman-born, and feel no shame?
Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead
Expedience as a warrant for the deed?"

"Has God then giv'n its sweetness to the cane
" (Unless his laws be trampled on) in vain?"

COWPER'S POEMS, Vol. I. p. 189.

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye
even so to them. MATT. Chap. vii. ver. 12."

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M DCC XCII.

The Sentiments contained in the following Lines are so well expressed, and so apposite to the Subject of this Sketch, that the Editor deems an Apology unnecessary for introducing them to the Notice of the Reader.

My ear is pain'd,
My soul is sick with ev'ry day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man; the nat'ral bond
Of brotherhood is sever'd as the flax
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow *guilty* of a skin
Not colour'd like his own; and, having pow'r
T' inforce the wrong, for such a *worthy* cause,
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey,
And worse than all, and most to be deplor'd
As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
With stripes, that mercy with a bleeding heart
Weeps when she sees inflicted on a *beast*.
Then what is man? and what man seeing this,
And having human feelings, does not blush
And hang his head, to think himself a man!



I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
Which sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.
No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Just estimation priz'd above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.

We have no slaves at home.—Then why abroad?
And they themselves, once ferried o'er the waves
That part us, are emancipate and loos'd.
Slaves cannot breath in *England*: if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free;
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
And let it circulate through ev'ry vein
Of all your empire; that where Britain's pow'r
Is felt, mankind may feel her *mercy* too.

A

SHORT SKETCH, &c.

VIRTUE, say moralists, is so transcendently beautiful, that she need but be *seen* to be universally admired :—and is not VICE so hateful, that the more its features are *viewed*, the more it will be avoided ? The traffic in the human species, particularly as carried on by the Europeans on the coast of Africa, has so horrible an aspect, that nothing, one should think, but the MASK, under which it has been concealed, could have prevented all the civilized nations in the world uniting to drive the detested MONSTER from the face of the earth. This MASK is, however, at length taken away, and the traffic stands exposed in all its unalterable deformity. The PEOPLE are now called upon to behold, to feel and judge for themselves. The representations of former writers on this subject were roundly denied ; the facts they stated were not only contradicted, but deemed impossible ; and the authors themselves were accused of slander. Now we have a body of EVIDENCE to which to appeal—of evidence possessing every essential of *credibility*. The witnesses have declared before the Lords of the Committee of Council, and before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, what they themselves saw,—they had the best opportunities of observation, and they are disinterested. And now it appears, that one half of the tale of human misery had not been told—and that every principle that can bind a man of honour and conscience,* loudly calls for the prohibition of the iniquitous Traffic. Hard indeed must those hearts be, and inaccessible those understandings,† which such evidence cannot reach !

The magnitude and expensiveness of the Report of the Privy Council, place it out of the reach of the generality of readers. THE EVIDENCE DELIVERED BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS is scarcely less voluminous, occupying two thousand pages in folio. But here

* Speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons.

† Fox's ditto.

the obstacle to a general perusal is removed, by a judicious ABSTRACT and ARRANGEMENT OF THE EVIDENCE ON THE PART OF THE PETITIONERS FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE-TRADE.* A publication that will leave all, who have had the opportunity of seeing it, without excuse for ignorance.

In the PREFACE to this important volume of evidence we read of rewards offered for taking run-away negroes *alive or dead*—of laws being required to be made to prevent the practice of *cutting off ears, noses, and tongues*—of *breaking limbs and putting out eyes*—to prevent *distempered, maimed, and worn-out negroes* from infesting towns—to prevent *aged and infirm negroes* being driven from the plantations *to starve*. We meet also with such kind of PREAMBLES to acts as the following, viz.

Whereas the *extreme cruelty and inhumanity* of the managers, overseers, and book-keepers of estates, have frequently driven slaves into the woods, and occasioned rebellions, internal insurrections, &c.—And whereas also it frequently happens, that slaves come to their deaths by *hasty and severe blows* and other *improper treatment* of overseers and book-keepers, *in the heat of passion*; and when such accidents do happen, the victims are entered in the plantation books, as having *died of convulsions, fits, or other causes not to be accounted for*; and to conceal the real truth of the cause of the death of such slave or slaves, he or they is or are *immediately put under ground, &c.* Other preambles of a similar complexion, respecting the *lodging, food, and clothes*, of negroes, are here to be met with. We also find that run-away negroes, when advertised, are described by the various *brands* upon their shoulders, breasts, cheeks, and foreheads. A woman is described with a *wooden leg*; a man as having *both his ears cropt*, and another by *his nose and ears being cut off*. Cornwall Chronicle, Nov. 7, 1789. Other instances occurred within the year 1791.

The FIRST CHAPTER contains an account of the Enormities committed by the Natives of Africa on the Persons of one another, to procure slaves for the Europeans—proved by the testimony of such as have visited that continent,—and confirmed by accounts from the slaves themselves, after their arrival in the West-Indies.

Under this head we learn that *Kidnapping*, or, as the natives call it, *Panyaring*, is very common,—that war is made *on purpose* to procure slaves.—The king's soldiers set fire to villages in the night, and seize the wretched inhabitants as they

* Printed by J. Phillips, George-Yard, Lombard-Street.—Price 9d.

attempt to escape from the flames, and many perish either by the fire or sword in the execution of this horrid purpose. A Boy, who was carried away in the night from his father's house, says he believes both his parents were killed, he is sure that one was, and that many others were killed and some taken. Various instances are mentioned of consummate treachery employed in making captives. Kidnapping is professionally followed,—large parties go up the country three hundred miles to drive down captives,—they go a *wood-ranging* and pick up every one they meet, and strip them naked. The purchasers generally say, they don't care how the sellers come by their slaves. Many are sold for crimes falsely imputed; the Judges participate the profits of the sale, and are therefore strongly induced to condemn the innocent. Crimes are invented and multiplied for the purpose of the traffic. The great men *dress up and employ women*, to entice young men to be connected with them, *that they may be convicted of adultery and sold*. The slaves are separated without the least regard to ties of consanguinity, or the pathetic expostulations and remonstrances of nature. When slave ships are on the Coast the natives go armed, but are no where safe. The man, invited to drink with his neighbour, on rising to go is seized by two of them and a large dog: and this mode of seizure is *common*.

By the SECOND CHAPTER it appears that the Europeans, by means of the trade in slaves, are the occasion of the before-mentioned enormities—that they sometimes use additional means to excite the natives to practice them—often attempt themselves to steal the natives, and succeed—force trade as they please, and are guilty of injustice in their dealings.* In proof of this charge we learn from the evidence, that Africans receive European goods in exchange for slaves—that they declare when ships cease to come (as in times of war) slaves cease to be taken. African dealers make the princes drunk, in order to overcome their aversion to unprovoked war: they furnish the natives with arms and ammunition, and excite them to pillage.

* “ The whole, or the greatest part, of the immense continent of Africa is a field of warfare and desolation; a wilderness in which the inhabitants are wolves towards each other. That this scene of oppression, fraud, treachery, and blood, if not originally occasioned, is IN PART (I will not say WHOLLY) upheld by the Slave Trade, I dare not dispute. Every man in the Sugar Islands may be convinced that it is so, who will inquire of any African Negroes, on their first arrival, concerning the circumstance of their captivity. The assertion that a great many of these are criminals and convicts, is mockery and insult.” Edward's Speech in the House of Assembly in Jamaica, quoted by W. Wilberforce, Esq. in the House of Commons.

The term *war*, in Africa, is used in general to signify *pillage*, and when many towns are seen blazing in the night, the natives say *war is carrying on*.

The Traders *advance* goods to Chiefs to induce them to seize their subjects or neighbours. Capt. Patterson set two villages at variance, and bought prisoners from both sides. It is not uncommon to make the natives drunk, and then buy them. General Rooke says, that it was proposed to him by three English captains of ships, to kidnap a hundred, or a hundred and fifty men, women, and children, king Damel's subjects, who had come to Goree in consequence of the friendly intercourse between him and Damel: He refused and was much shocked by the proposition. They said such things had been done by a former governor. Two men, black traders, were invited on board—intoxicated—and captured when asleep. The GREGSON's people in running down the coast kidnapped thirty-two of the natives. The DOBSON's boat of Liverpool had stolen a man and woman: the captain, on the remonstrance of Capt. Briggs, who told him, there would be no more trade if he did not deliver up his two captives, restored them; upon which the natives loaded a boat with yams, goats, fowls, honey, and palm-wine; and would take nothing for them,—a striking instance of forgiveness of injuries, and of unmerited kindness!

We then meet with as opposite an exhibition of character as can possibly be conceived: three or four hundred Africans cruelly massacred or carried off, by means of the treacherous contrivance of six English captains in Old Calabar River. But let us "turn our eyes for relief to some ordinary wickednesses:"—Some consider frauds as a necessary part of the traffic—they put false heads into powder casks, cut off two or three yards from the middle of a piece of cloth, adulterate spirits, and steal back articles given. Besides these, there are others who pay in bottles, which hold but half the contents of the samples shewn; use false steel-yards and weights, and sell such guns as burst on firing, so that many of the natives of the windward coast, are without their fingers and thumbs on this account, and it has become a saying that these guns kill more out of the butt than the muzzle.

The THIRD CHAPTER contains an account of the transportation of the enslaved Africans, and of the method of confining, airing, feeding, and exercising them—incidents on the passage, and the manner of selling them when arrived at their destined

* Wilberforce's Speech in the House of Commons.

ports—the deplorable situation of the refuse or sickly slaves—separation of relations and friends—mortality on the passage,* and frequently after sale—and the causes of this mortality.

On being brought on board, says Dr. Trotter, they shew signs of extreme distress and despair, from a feeling of their situation, and regret at being torn from their friends and connections. They sometimes dream of being in their own country, and when they awake shew their despair by howling and shrieking in a dreadful manner. The women go into fits. In the course of the voyage the slaves are chained to the deck every day from eight in the morning to four o'clock in the afternoon. They are fed twice a day with rice, yams, and horse-beans, and now and then a little beef and bread: after each of these two meals they are allowed half a pint of water; and are forced to *jump in their irons*, which by the slave dealers is called making them *dance*. This exercise frequently occasions the fetters to excoriate their limbs; and when it is very painful to move at all, they are compelled to dance by a **at-of-nine-tails*. The captains order them to sing, and they sing *songs of sorrow*, the subjects of which are *their wretched situation, and the idea of never returning home*: the witness remembers the very words upon these occasions.

The slaves are so crowded below, that it is impossible to walk among them without treading upon them. Dr. Trotter has seen the slaves drawing their breath with all those laborious and anxious efforts for life, *which are observed in expiring animals, subjected by experiment to foul air or in the exhausted receiver of an air-pump*: they cry out *we are dying*, and many are irrecoverably lost *by suffocation*, having had *no previous signs of indisposition*. They are closely wedged together and have not so much room as *a man in his coffin* either in length or breadth. They go down well at night, and are found dead in the morning. Alexander Falconbridge was never among them for ten minutes together below, but his shirt was as wet as if dipped in water. Sometimes the dead and living are found shackled together. They lie on the *bare planks*, and the prominent parts of their bones, about the shoulder blade and knees, have frequently been seen *bare*. No situation can be conceived so dreadful and disgusting as that of slaves when ill of the flux. In the Alexander (A. Falconbridge says) the deck was *covered with blood*

* * "The destruction of the Negroes on the middle passage is so great as to give to the march of Death seventeen times its usual speed, and that if general but for ten years, would depopulate the world." H. Beaufoy's Speech on the Bill for regulating the transportation of Slaves from Africa, 1788.

and mucus, and resembled a slaughter-house, the stench and foul air were intolerable. The slaves shackled together frequently quarrel, and make a great disturbance. They declare they want to die, and refuse food and medicine. In such cases compulsion is used. The ships are so fitted up as to prevent, by net-work, the slaves jumping over-board; notwithstanding which, they often attempt it, and sometimes succeed, shewing signs of exultation in the very jaws of death. They employ every other means in their power to destroy themselves. Some of them go mad. They resolve to starve, and means are ineffectually used to wrench open their teeth: they persist in their resolution, and effect their purpose, in spite of the utmost pains to prevent it. When severely chastised for not taking their food, they have looked up with a smile and said, "*presently we shall be no more.*" The thumb-screw is an instrument of torture, the application of it sometimes occasions mortifications, of which the negroes die. An instance occurs of the cruelty of a captain to an infant only nine months old, which one would suppose too shocking to be true, were it not corroborated by other specimens of as great cruelty in various parts of the evidence. After a series of tortures the infant expired, and its savage murderer, not yet satiated, would suffer none of the people on deck to throw the body over-board, but called the *Mother*, the wretched *Mother*, to perform this last sad office to her murdered child. Unwilling, as it might naturally be supposed, she was, to comply, "he beat her," regardless of the indignant murmurs of her fettered countrymen, whom, in the barbarous plenitude of secure tyranny, he permitted to be spectators of this horrible scene—"he beat her," till he made her take up the child and carry it to the side of the vessel, and then she dropped it into the sea, turning her head another way, that she might not see it!"*—Another instance occurs in this chapter not perhaps of more cruelty, though of greater magnitude.

A ship from Africa, with about four hundred slaves on board, struck upon some shoals, called the Morant Keys, distant eleven leagues, S. S. E. off the East-end of Jamaica. The officers and seamen of the ship landed in their boats, carrying with them arms and provisions. The slaves were left on board in their irons and shackles. This happened in the night time. When morning came, it was discovered that the negroes had got out of their irons, and were busy making rafts, upon which they placed the women and children: the men, who were capable of swimming, attended upon the rafts, whilst they drifted before the

* Speech of W. Smith in the House of Commons.

wind towards the island where the seamen had landed. From an *apprehension* that the negroes would consume the water and provisions which the seamen had landed, they came to the resolution of destroying them, by means of their fire-arms and other weapons. As the poor wretches approached the shore, *they actually destroyed between three and four hundred of them.* Out of the whole cargo *only thirty-three or thirty-four were saved,* and brought to Kingston, where they were sold at public vendue.

When the ships arrive at their destined ports, the cargo of slaves is sold, either by scramble or vendue. The sale by scramble is thus described:—"A great number of people come on board with tallies in their hands (the ship being first darkened with sails and covered round; the men slaves placed on the main deck, and the women on the quarter deck) and rush through the barricado door with the ferocity of brutes. Some have three or four handkerchiefs tied together, to encircle as many as they think fit for their purpose. This is a very general mode of sale, and so terrifies the poor negroes, that forty or fifty at a time have leaped into the sea—these, however, the witness believes, have been taken up again:—the women have got away, and run about the town as if they were mad. The slaves sold by public auction or vendue, are generally the *refuse*, or sickly slaves. These are in such a state of health, that they sell *greatly under price.* They have been known to be sold for five dollars, a guinea, and even a single dollar each. Some that are deemed not worth buying are left to expire in the place of sale, for *nobody gives them any thing to eat or drink, and some of them live three days in that situation!* In the sale no care is taken to prevent the separation of relations—they are separated (says the evidence) *like sheep and lambs by the butcher.* Making the slaves *walk the plank* is a term used for throwing them over-board when provisions are scarce. Sometimes the ships lose more than half their cargoes by the small-pox; at others they bury a quarter or one-third on the passage, owing to various other causes of mortality: and it is confessed by the planters,* that half the slaves die in the *seasoning*, after their arrival in the West-Indies. Surgeon Wilson says, that of the death of two-thirds of those who died in his ship, the primary cause was *melancholy.* The disorders which carry off the slaves in such numbers, are ascribed by Falconbridge to a *diseased mind, sudden transitions from heat to cold, a putrid atmosphere, wallowing in their own excrements, and being shackled together.*

The captains, surgeons, &c. who have quitted the African

* See Stanley's Speech in the House of Commons.

slave-trade, uniformly declare the reason to have been, that they could not conscientiously continue in it: they say, that it is an *unnatural, iniquitous, and villanous trade, founded on injustice and treachery; manifestly carried on by oppression and cruelty, and not unfrequently terminating in murder.* Capt. Hall says, he quitted it, in opposition to lucrative offers, *from a conviction that it was perfectly illegal, and founded in blood.*

The **FOURTH CHAPTER** gives an account of the general estimation and treatment of the slaves in the West-Indies. Dr. Jackson says, that the negroes are generally esteemed a species of inferior beings, whom the right of purchase gives the owner a power of using at his will. T. Woolrich says, he never knew the best master in the West-Indies use his slaves so well as the worst master his servants in England:—that their state is inconceivable—that a sight of a gang would convince more than all words.

Slaves are either **FIELD-SLAVES, OR IN OR OUT-DOOR SLAVES.**

The field-slaves begin their work at break of day. They work in rows, without exception under the whip of drivers, and the weak are made to keep up with the strong. They continue their labour (with two intermissions, half an hour during the morning, and two hours at noon) till sun set. In the intervals they are made to pick grass for the cattle. Cook has known pregnant women worked and flogged a few days before their delivery. Some, however, are a little indulged when in that state. After the month they work with the children on their backs. In the crop-season the labour is of much longer duration.* The slaves sometimes work so long that they cannot help sleeping, and then it not unfrequently happens, that their arms are caught in the mill, and torn off. They are said to be allowed one day in seven for rest, but this time is necessarily employed in raising food for the other days, and gathering grass for their masters cattle. The best allowance of food is at Barbadoes, which is a pint of grain for twenty-four hours, and half a rotten herring when to be had. When the herrings are unfit for the whites, they are bought up by planters for the slaves. Some allow nine pints of corn a week, and about one pound of salt fish, which is the greatest allowance mentioned in the whole course of the evidence. Some have no provision but what they raise themselves, and they are frequently so fatigued

* In some estates, it is usual to dig a hole in the ground, in which they put the bellies of pregnant women, while they whip them, that they may not excuse punishment, nor yet endanger the life of the woman or child.

by the labour of the rest of the week, as scarcely to be able to work for their own support on the Sunday. And the land allotted them for this purpose is often at the distance of three miles from their houses: it would however be quite ample for their support, were they allowed time sufficient for its cultivation. Sometimes when they have been at the pains of clearing their land, their masters take it for canes, and give them wood land instead of it. This hardship some have so taken to heart as to die. Putrid carcases are burnt—if they were buried, the slaves would dig them up and eat them, which would breed distempers among them. They are sometimes driven by extreme hunger to steal at the hazard of their lives. They are badly clothed, one half of them go almost naked. The slaves in general have no bed or bedding at all. Their houses are built with four poles and thatched. They have little or no property. All the evidences (to whom the question has been proposed) agree in answering, that they never knew or heard of a *field-slave* ever amassing such a sum, as enabled him to purchase his own freedom. The artificers, such as house carpenters, coopers, masons, and the drivers and head slaves, are better off. The owners of women let them out for prostitution, and flog them, if they do not bring home full wages.

The negroes, when whipt, are suspended by the arms, with weights at their feet. They are first whipt with a whip made of cow-skin (which cuts out the *flesh*, whereas the military whips cut only the *skin*) and afterwards with ebony bushes (which are more prickly than thorn bushes in this country) in order to *let out the congealed blood*. Dr. Harrison thinks the whipping too severe to be inflicted on any human being: he could lay two or three fingers into the wounds of a man whipped for not coming when he was called. Many receive from one hundred and fifty to two hundred lashes at a time; and in two or three days this is repeated: they wash the raw parts with pickle—this appears, from the convulsions it occasions, more cruel than whipping, but it is done to prevent mortification. After severe whipping they are worked all day without food, except what their friends may give them out of their own poor pitance. They are returned to the stocks at night, and worked next day successively. This cruel treatment has made many commit suicide. Coor has known fourteen slaves, who, in consequence thereof, ran into the woods and cut their throats together. These severe punishments are frequent. The scars made by whipping last to old age. T. Woolrich has seen their backs one undistinguished mass of lumps, holes, and furrows.

They sometimes die of a mortification of the wounds. A planter flogged his driver to death, and boasted of having so done.

Under the head of *extraordinary* punishments (for those already named are reckoned only *ordinary*) mention is made of iron collars with hooks*—heavy cattle chains, and a half hundred weight fastened to them, which the negroes are forced to drag after them, when working in the field—suspending by the hands till the fingers mortify—flogging with ebony bushes till they are forced to go on all-fours, unable to get up—being tied up to the branch of a tree, with a heavy weight round the neck, exposed to the noon-day sun—thumb-screws—a man was put on the picket, so long as to occasion a mortification of his foot and hand, on suspicion of robbing his master, a public officer, of a sum of money, which it afterwards appeared, *the master had taken himself*. Yet the master was privy to the punishment, and the slave had no compensation. He was punished *by order of the master, who did not then chuse to make it known that he himself had made use of the money*. A girl's ears were nailed to a post, afterwards torn away, and clipt off close to her head, with a pair of large scissers; besides this, she was unmercifully flogged, and all for—BREAKING A PLATE, OR SPILLING A CUP OF TEA!! A negro, impelled by hunger, had stolen part of a turkey—his master caused him to be held down, and, with his own hands, took a hammer and punch and *knocked out four of his teeth*. The hand is cut off if lifted up against a white man, and the leg for running away. A planter sent for a surgeon to cut off the leg of a negro who had run away. On the surgeon's refusing to do it, the planter *took an iron bar, and broke the leg in pieces*, and then the surgeon *cut it off*. This planter did many such acts of cruelty, and all with *impunity*. The practice of dropping hot lead upon the negroes, is here mentioned. H. Ross saw a young female suspended by her wrists to a tree, swinging to and fro, while her master applied a lighted torch to the different parts of her writhing body. It

* General Tottenham saw a youth, about nineteen, walking in the streets, in a most deplorable situation, entirely naked, and with an iron collar about his neck, with five long projecting spikes. His body, before and behind, his breech, belly, and thighs, were almost cut to pieces, and with running sores all over them, and you might put your finger in some of the wheals. He could not sit down, owing to his breech being in a state of mortification, and it was impossible for him to lie down, from the projection of the prongs. The boy came to the general to ask relief. He was shocked at his appearance, and asked him what he had done to suffer such a punishment, and who inflicted it. He said it was his master, who lived about two miles from town, and that as he could not work, he would give him nothing to eat.

was notorious that Rushie tortured so many of his negroes to death, that he was obliged to sell his estate. Another planter, in the same island,* destroyed forty slaves out of sixty (in three years) by severity. The rest of the conduct of this infamous wretch was cancelled by the Committee of the House of Commons, as containing circumstances too horrible to be given to the world. We, however, go on to read of knocking on the head and stabbing—of a hot iron forced between the teeth—of a slave thrown into the boiling juice, and killed—of a negro shot and his head cut off. And, it appears, that the women, deemed of respectability and rank, not only order and superintend, but sometimes actually inflict with their own hands severe punishments on their slaves.

The offences for which the before-mentioned punishments are inflicted are, not coming into the field *in time*, not picking a *sufficient quantity of grass*, not appearing willing to work, when in fact *sick and not able*; for staying *too long* on an errand, for not coming *immediately when called*, for not bringing home (the women) *the full weekly sum* enjoined by their owners; for *running away*, and for *theft*, to which they are often driven by hunger.

Under the head of "*extraordinary punishments*" some appear to have suffered for *running away*, or for lifting up a hand against a *white man*, or for *breaking a plate*, or *spilling a cup of tea*, or to *extort confession*. Others again, in the *moments of sudden resentment*, and one on a diabolical pretext, which the master held out to the world *to conceal his own villany, and which he knew to be false*.

The slaves have little or no redress against ill-usage of any sort—the laws to restrict punishment are a mere farce, and universally disregarded, or when pretended to be observed, they are in divers ways effectually evaded; besides, the evidence of a black is in no case whatever admitted against a white man, which circumstance alone is enough to deprive the negroes of all legal protection whatever, were the laws, in other respects, ever so just and salutary. Lieutenant Davison was so hurt at the severe and frequent whippings of one of the women, that he complained to a magistrate, who said *he had nothing to do with it*.

The particular instances mentioned in the evidence, of slaves dying in consequence of severe and cruel treatment from their masters, were not punished though generally known: nor do the perpetrators of these barbarities appear to have suffered any disgrace!

* Jamaica.

If you speak to a negro of future punishments, he says—
*“ Why should a poor negro be punished, he does no wrong ;—
 fiery cauldrons and such things, are reserved for white people, as
 punishments for the oppression of slaves.”*

The new acts of parliament, the evidence obliges us to observe, are in reality of little or no use.

In the FIFTH CHAPTER it is proved, by such as have seen them in their own country, that the natives of Africa are equal to the Europeans in their natural capacities, feelings, affections, and moral character.—They manufacture gold and iron in some respects equal to the European artists—also cloth and leather with uncommon neatness; the former they dye blue, yellow, brown, and orange. They are skilful in making indigo and soap and pottery wares, and prepare salt for their own use from the sea water. They also make ropes with aloes. With respect to their moral character—they are very honest and hospitable—grateful and affectionate—harmless and innocent—just and punctual in their dealings, and as capable of virtue as the whites. They are susceptible of all the social virtues—generosity, fidelity, and gratitude are allowed them by Dr. Stuart—These virtues Dr. Jackson enumerates, and adds charity to all in distress, and a strong attachment on the part of parents to their children. T. Woolrich says, he never knew of an African, who could express himself, that did not believe in the existence of a Supreme Being.

In the SIXTH and SEVENTH CHAPTERS it appears that the natives possess industry and a spirit of commerce, sufficient for carrying on a new trade—that their country abounds with, and might easily be made still more productive of many and various valuable articles of commerce—but that the traffic in slaves is an insuperable impediment to opening a new trade.

In the EIGHTH CHAPTER it is inquired, whether the slave-trade be not a grave (instead of a nursery) of the seamen employed in it.

It appears by the muster-rolls of Liverpool and Bristol, that in three hundred and fifty vessels, twelve thousand two hundred and sixty-three men were employed, out of whom two thousand six hundred and forty-three were lost, that is to say, more than *a fifth* of the whole number employed, or more than seven in every single voyage—besides nearly one-half of those who go out with the ships are constantly left behind.

Capt. Hall (of the merchant's service) says, that the crews of the African ships, when they arrive in the West-Indies, are the most miserable objects he ever met with in any country in his life : he does not know a single instance to the contrary.—

He

He has frequently seen them with *their toes rotted off—their legs swelled to the size of their thighs*, and in an ulcerated state all over, &c. &c. This account is confirmed by Capt. Hall of the navy. Sir W. Young is of opinion, that a trade to Africa in the natural productions of the country, would not be attended with more inconvenience to the health of the seamen employed in it, than the present West-India trade.

In the NINTH CHAPTER we find, that the seamen employed in the slave-trade are in general barbarously used. They are worse fed, both in quantity and quality of food, than the seamen in other trades. They have little or no shelter night or day from the inclemency of the weather during the whole of the middle passage. They are inhumanly treated when ill, and subjected to the fury of the impassioned officers for very trifles. A boy, to avoid the cruel treatment of his officer, jumped over-board and was drowned. A man was killed with a hand-spike for *being very ill and unable to work*. Six men were chained together by their necks, legs, and hands, for making their escape from the vessel—they were allowed only a plantain a day—they all died in their chains, one of them (Thomas Jones, a very good seaman) raving mad! The evidence proves, that instances of wanton cruelty, and inhuman treatment in general, are numerous, various, and frequent. One man, with both his legs in irons and his neck in an iron collar, was chained to the boat for three months, and very often most inhumanly beaten for complaining of his situation, both by the captain and other officers. His allowance of provisions was so small, that, after his release from the boat on account of extreme weakness, he begged something to eat, saying, that if it was not given him he should die:—the captain reproached him, beat him, and bid him die and be damned. The man died in the night. This was in the ship Sally, on board of which, ill-treatment was common. Another man was deliberately, by a series of shocking barbarities, murdered.

Sir George Young remarks, that a ship of the line might be presently manned by the sailors who wish to escape from the miseries of the African ships. One poor man, when dying in consequence of the ill-treatment he had received from the captain, said (which were the last words A. Falconbridge heard him speak) “I cannot punish him, meaning the captain, but God will.” The sailors *when sick* are beaten for being *lazy*, till they die under the blows!

“If this be the real situation of things, how happens it, the reader may perhaps ask, that the objects of such tyranny and oppression should not obtain redress, and that our courts of law should

should not have to decide upon more cases of this kind, than they have at present?" It is answered, "these objects are generally without friends and money, without which the injured will seek for justice but in vain; and because the peculiarity of their situation is an impediment to their endeavours for redress." Whoever wishes for a more particular answer to this question, may meet with it in "Clarkson's Essay on the Impolicy of the African Slave-Trade," (page 52) from which the question and the above general reply are quoted.

If it should still be asked,—“how it happens that seamen enter for slave vessels, when such general ill usage on board of them can hardly fail of being known?”—the reply must be taken from the evidence,—“that whereas some of them enter voluntarily, the greater part of them are trepanned, for that it is the business of certain landlords to make them intoxicated, and get them into debt, after which, *their only alternative is a Guineaman or a goal.*

In the TENTH CHAPTER it is proved not to be true, what some say, that the natives of Africa are happier in the European colonies than in their own country. They love their own country, but destroy themselves in the colonies, &c. &c. But any comparison between the two situations is as (H. Ross says, though on another occasion) “*an insult to common sense.*”

The ELEVENTH, TWELFTH, and THIRTEENTH CHAPTERS, are on the subject of negro population in the colonies, and plainly shew, that the importation of fresh Africans might immediately be superseded, by the introduction of general good treatment, and of certain salutary regulations therein suggested.

The FOURTEENTH CHAPTER is employed to demonstrate, from the evidence before the committee, that the colonists would be able to carry on the necessary cultivation of their lands, without a fresh importation of slaves, while the generation immediately succeeding the regulations proposed were growing up to supply the vacancies occasioned by the natural deaths of the slaves of all ages, now in their possession.

The FIFTEENTH CHAPTER inquires, whether there be not a prevailing opinion in the colonies, that it is cheaper to buy or import slaves than thus to increase them by population.—And whether the very reverse of this opinion be not true; namely, that it is more profitable to breed than to import. The result of this inquiry is clearly in favour of the *immediate* Abolition of the African Slave-Trade. The same may be said of the SIXTEENTH and last CHAPTER, in which it is considered—Whether it be more politic to extend the cultivation of
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of the colonies by the continuance of the slave-trade, or wait till the rising generation shall be capable of performing it.

Having thus taken a general view of the most striking features of the evidence for the abolition of the traffic in the human species, as carried on by the English on the coast of Africa, it might not be improper to close it with the declaration of a virtuous and wise Senator, whose indefatigable labours on behalf of the oppressed Africans cannot fail to insure him the unfeigned respect of every lover of freedom and humanity :

“ THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE-TRADE (*says he*) IS INDISPENSIBLY REQUIRED OF US, NOT ONLY BY RELIGION AND MORALITY, BUT BY EVERY PRINCIPLE OF SOUND POLICY.”*

“ If the bounty of Providence (continued the honourable Mover of the Question) had showered its blessings on us in unparalleled abundance, let us show ourselves grateful, as we ought, for the blessings we enjoyed, by rendering them subservient to those purposes for which they were intended. *There would be a day of retribution, wherein we should have to give an account of all those talents and faculties, and opportunities, with which we had been intrusted.* Let it not then appear, that our superior power had been employed to oppress our fellow-creatures, and our superior light to darken the Creation of God.”

The noble exordium of another able advocate of the same righteous cause must not be omitted in this place: The House of Commons being now apprized of the nature of this trade, having received evidence, having had the facts undeniably established, knowing, in short, *what the Slave-Trade was*, he declared, that if they did not, by the vote of that night, mark to all mankind their abhorrence of a practice so enormous, so savage, so repugnant to all laws, human and divine, it would be more scandalous, and more defaming, in the eyes of the country, and of the world, than any vote which any House of Commons had ever given. He desired them seriously to reflect, before they gave their votes, what they were about to do that evening. If they voted that the Slave-Trade should not be abolished, *they would, by their vote that night, give a parliamentary sanction to RAPINE, ROBBERY, and MURDER*; for a system of rapine, robbery, and murder, the Slave-Trade had now *most clearly been proved to be.*†

* Speech of W. Wilberforce, Esq. in the House of Commons.

† Speech of C. J. Fox, in the House of Commons.—Reported by Woodfall.

IT remains now to recommend, as earnestly and as strongly as possible, to the inhabitants of this Land of Freedom individually, a particular and serious attention to THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY, ON EVERY CONSIDERATION OF MORALITY AND JUSTICE, OF PUTTING AN END TO A PRACTICE, SO PREGNANT WITH CIRCUMSTANCES OF TERROR AND ALARM TO THIS COUNTRY.

Much has been lately done, by the united friends of equitable freedom, in circulating throughout the kingdom, important information on this interesting subject: but much remains yet to be done. The minds of many have been informed, and their indignation justly kindled by the history of a commerce "*written throughout in characters of blood.*"* But the understandings, it is to be feared, of a great majority of the people of England, are still unenlightened. Should the foregoing Short Sketch of the Evidence, awaken the feelings, or quicken the attention of any, in favour of their greatly-injured fellow-creatures—the oppressed Africans, and their unhappy offspring—it is much to be wished, that they will not hastily dismiss the subject from their recollection, or suffer its painful impressions to be made in vain: but seek a further acquaintance with the evidence, which the more they examine, the stronger will be their inducements to exert every power and faculty they possess, for the purpose of procuring the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, meliorating the situation of those in slavery, and finally, in proper time, securing their emancipation. Let no one say, "my situation of privacy and obscurity precludes all possibility of serving the cause"—for the greatest numbers consist of units, and the most mighty exertions of states and empires are but aggregates of individual ability. The discovery of truth, the communication of useful knowledge, and the exemplary commendation of virtuous conduct, may dignify a plebeian, as well as add lustre to a crown. Even a negro slave, amidst the horrors of a middle-passage, and debased by every external circumstance of degradation and misery that the imagination can conceive, shall divide his meagre morsel † with the inhuman monster in distress, who stole him from his native country, and his nearest connexions, thereby returning all the GOOD in his power, for all the EVIL his merciless enemy could inflict, and giving an example of true benevolence of heart and real greatness of mind, unsurpassed in the history of civilized

* Speech of W. Wilberforce, Esq. in the House of Commons.

† In one of the ships we find the slaves privately and voluntarily feeding the hungry sailors with a part of their own scanty allowance.

nations, and worthy of the best and purest of all religions :—
*" If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink."**
 Let no one, therefore, think too meanly of himself when called upon to assist in a good cause, seeing, that from the most abject state of human wretchedness a lesson may sometimes be learnt, and an influence imparted which the proudest philosophy need not blush to own. The abolition of the slave-trade, the diminishing the miseries of those in slavery, and securing to them, in due time, their release from cruel bondage, are objects of such high importance, and so nearly concern every one, who has a mind to comprehend, and a heart to feel, that no communication of assistance is too *small*, nor any too *great*, to be exerted upon this occasion.

Some people seem inclined to lend an ear to tales of human woe, and feel a certain gratification in beholding the exhibitions of tragedy, or in the perusal of pathetic poetry, and the like. Even the case of the oppressed Africans, when represented by their favourite bards, or appearing in the form of the "*Dying Slave*," or the "*Negroes Complaint*," seems to possess, if not charms to please, at least powers forcibly to attract their willing attention, and to win their sympathetic regard. Yet the evidence delivered before the House of Commons, containing a true and faithful account of the miseries and wickedness attendant upon the traffic in their fellow-creatures, unembellished by flourishes of rhetoric, undecorated with the splendid habiliments of poetry, is almost in vain recommended to their notice. Should they be prevailed upon to cast their eye over a few pages of the shocking history, they presently shut up the book—it makes them shudder—they have read enough—such horrid barbarities, such complicated sufferings are not to be endured even in imagination! But let such remember—"that humanity consists not in a squeamish ear—it consists not in starting or shrinking at such tales as these, but in a disposition of heart to relieve misery, and to prevent the repetition of cruelty :—Humanity appertains rather to the mind than to the nerves, and prompts men to real, disinterested endeavours to give happiness to their fellow-creatures."[†] It is therefore to be wished that no affectation of extreme sensibility, or real effeminacy of manners, may disincline or disqualify for the service of humanity. That extreme DELICACY which deprives us, if not of the disposition, yet of the ability to encounter suffering for the sake of, and in order to help, our bretheren in

* Rom. chap. xii. ver. 20.

† Fox's Speech in the House of Commons,

affliction and under the severest oppression, is detrimental to its possessor, and injurious to the community; it renders compassion a painful, useless thing, and makes beneficence fruitless.

To the busy and the gay "*a great book is* (at all times) *a great evil.*" TWO THOUSAND PAGES IN FOLIO, written (like Ezekiel's roll) within and without,—lamentations, mourning, and woe, stand but little chance of obtaining *their* notice—even THE ABSTRACT OF THE EVIDENCE, published for their accommodation, would detain some of them too long from their eager pursuits of business, or their favourite schemes of pleasure. This HASTY SKETCH will not, however, it may be presumed, encroach too much upon their time; and well rewarded will the compiler of it be, if it should prove a stimulus to further investigation of the Evidence, which the more it is examined, the more claim it will have to credibility. No one knows what opportunities he may have, or how far his influence may extend, to assist the endeavours now using for the abolition of a trade, the continued carrying on of which, after being so fully apprized of its dreadful enormity, may be expected (without the smallest tincture of superstitious fear) to expose this nation to the just punishment of AN AVENGING PROVIDENCE.

Three nations, JUVAN, TUBAL, and MESHECH, are mentioned in Scripture* as having their principal trade at TYRE in the *selling of men*. This circumstance has been appealed to in vindication of the African Slave-Trade:—but mark the sequel. In the following chapter, verse 18, the Prophet addresses the Prince of Tyre thus:—"Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by THE INIQUITY OF THY TRAFFIC: *therefore* will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth." A prophecy which has been remarkably fulfilled.†

Having pointed out the DISEASE, and endeavoured, by dwelling upon its dreadful nature and alarming consequences, to excite a general and serious attention to its CURE, it will be peculiarly proper to consider, what *remedy* may be the safest and best to adopt. The most obvious one seems to be, that of PETITIONING THE LEGISLATURE with one voice to abolish a traffic in every point of view so disgraceful and criminal. There is, however, another remedy, the success

* Ezek. chap. xxvii. ver. 13.

† See Remarks on the Slave-Trade (occasioned by Bruce's Travels) in the Gent. Mag. 1791, p. 707; which are particularly deserving of notice.

of which depends on private, individual practice; and which, if persisted in, promises an *infallible* cure.

The public having lately been much indebted to the author of "AN ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF GREAT-BRITAIN, ON THE PROPRIETY OF ABSTAINING FROM WEST-INDIA SUGAR AND RUM;" no apology, I presume, will be thought necessary, for adopting here so much of this popular ADDRESS, as may render the service of this sketch more extensive and complete. Our humble attempts are directed to the same important *Object*, and if that be attained, it is of little or no consequence, what instruments may have been employed.

Should the LEGISLATURE of this country continue to withhold its protection from that part of its West-Indian subjects, distinguished by a different colour of the skin, or find itself unequal to secure them from oppression, still it will be in the power of the PEOPLE here to afford that redress to their sufferings, which has been solicited from the guardians of our liberties in vain. "The laws of our country may indeed prohibit us the sugar-cane, unless we will receive it through the medium of slavery. They may hold it to our lips, steeped in the blood of our fellow-creatures; but they cannot compel us to accept the loathsome potion. With us it rests, either to receive it, and be partners in the crime, or to exonerate ourselves from guilt, by spurning from us the temptation. For let us not think, that the crime rests alone with those who conduct the traffic, or the legislature by which it is protected. If we purchase the commodity, we participate in the crime. The slave-dealer, the slave-holder, and the slave driver, are virtually the agents of the consumer, and may be considered as employed and hired by him to procure the commodity. For, by holding out the temptation, he is the original cause, the first mover in the horrid process; and every distinction is done away by the moral maxim, That whatever we do by another, we do ourselves."

"A French writer observes, "That he cannot look on a piece of sugar without conceiving it stained with spots of human blood:" and Dr. Franklin adds, "That had he taken in all the consequences, he might have seen the sugar not merely spotted, but thoroughly died scarlet in grain."

"Neither the slave-dealer, nor the slave-holder, can have any moral right to the person of him they style their slave, to his labour, or to the produce of it; so they can convey no right in that produce to us: and whatever number of hands it may pass through, if the criminal circumstances appertaining

it be known at the time of the transfer, they can only have a criminal possession: and the money paid, either for the slave, or for the produce of his labour, is paid to obtain that criminal possession; and can confer no moral right whatever. So, if the death of the person called a slave, be occasioned by the criminal possession, the criminal possessor is guilty of murder; and we, who have knowingly done any act which might occasion his being in that situation, are accessaries to the murder, as by receiving the produce of his labour, we are accessaries to the robbery.

“ If we, as individuals, concerned in the Slave-Trade (either by procuring the slaves, compelling them to labour, or receiving the produce) imagine that our share in the transaction is so minute, that it cannot perceptibly increase the injury: let us recollect that, though numbers partaking of a crime may diminish the shame, they cannot diminish its turpitude. Can we suppose, that an injury of enormous magnitude can take place, and the criminality be destroyed, merely by the criminals becoming so numerous as to render their respective shares indistinguishable? Were an hundred assassins to plunge their daggers into their victim, though each might plead, that without his assistance the crime would have been completed, and that his poinard neither occasioned nor accelerated the murder, yet every one of them would be guilty of the entire crime. For into how many parts soever a criminal action may be divided, the crime itself rests entire and complete on every perpetrator.”

The LEGISLATURE being unwilling or, perhaps, unable to grant redress, it is peculiarly incumbent on us, “ *To abstain from the use of sugar and rum, until our West-India Planters themselves have prohibited the importation of additional slaves, and commenced as speedy and effectual a subversion of slavery in their islands, as the circumstances and situation of the slaves will admit; or till we can obtain the produce of the sugar-cane in some other mode, unconnected with slavery, and unpolluted with blood.*

“ For surely it may be hoped that we shall not limit our views merely to the abolition of the African Slave-Trade, as the colonial slavery formed on it, is in its principle equally unjust. For if it be iniquitous to force the Africans from their native land; equally iniquitous must it be, to retain them and their posterity in perpetual bondage. And though the African Slave-Trade be the most prominent feature in this wickedness, yet it is but a feature; and were it abolished, the West-India slavery would still exist. And shall we suffer half a million of fellow-subjects, and their posterity, to be held in slavery for ever?

ever? I say, fellow-subjects, for undoubtedly, every person born in the dominions of Great-Britain is a subject, bound to obey, and entitled to the protection of the common law of England; and in opposition to which, the acts of assemblies, existing merely by grant from the crown, can be of no authority.

“ In demanding liberty then for the persons called Slaves in our islands, we demand no more than they are entitled to by the common law of the land. The most eligible mode of putting them in possession of their legal and natural right, may be a question of difficulty; but it is a question that ought to be considered with no other view, but to their happiness. The plan to be adopted, ought to be certain and speedy in its operation; should it even militate against the supposed, or even real interest, of their oppressors; and let it be remembered, that it is in the power of a small proportion of the people of England to effect it, by refusing to receive the produce: for the planters themselves would adopt the plan, were that the only condition on which we would consume the sugar of their islands: nor would the Legislature be then harassed with preposterous claims for compensation; which, however unfounded in justice or reason, will be supported by influence, and enforced with clamour.”

“ We are now called on to redress evils, in comparison with which, all that exist in this nation sink beneath our notice; and the only sacrifice we are required to make in order to effect it, is the abandoning a luxury, which habit alone can have rendered of importance, a luxury to which the industrious bee labours to supply an excellent succedaneum. If we refuse to listen to the admonitions of conscience on this occasion, may it not be justly inferred, that those numerous displays of humanity, of which this kingdom boasts, have not their foundation in any virtuous or valuable principle: but that to custom and ostentation they owe their origin? And if our execration of the Slave-Trade be any more than mere declamation against crimes we are not in a situation to commit, we shall, instead of being solicitous to find despicable distinctions to justify our conduct, abhor the idea of contributing in the least degree, to such scenes of misery.

“ If these be the deductions from the most obvious principles of reason, justice, or humanity, what must be the result if we extend our views to religious considerations? It will hardly be said, that we assume a religious profession to diminish the extent of our moral duties, or to weaken the force of our obligation to observe them.

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" May we not then ask, if we mean to insult the God we pretend to worship, by supplicating him to " have mercy " upon all prisoners and captives," and to " defend and provide for the fatherless, widows, and children, and all that " are desolate and oppressed." But, if the Dissenters suppose a national religion to be only matter of form, we may expect that they will think it, at the least, as requisite to dissent from the national crimes, as the national religion; unless they mean to prove they have consciences of so peculiar a texture, as to take offence at the religion of their country, while they can conform without scruple to its most criminal practices."

The great leader in the Debates of the House of Commons on this momentous subject has declared—" That interested as he might be supposed to be in the final event of the question, he was comparatively indifferent as to the then decision of the House. Whatever THEY might do, THE PEOPLE OF GREAT-BRITAIN, *he was confident, would abolish the slave-trade, when, as would now soon happen, its injustice and cruelty should be fairly laid before them.* It was (said he) a nest of serpents, which would never have endured so long, but for the darkness in which they lay hid. The light of day would now be let in upon them, and they would vanish from the sight."

W. B. C.

T H E E N D.

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